

## General Robert E. Lee's Family Life and Heritage

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### General Information

<b>Source:</b>	NBC News	<b>Resource Type:</b>	Video News Report
<b>Creator:</b>	N/A	<b>Copyright:</b>	© NBC Universal, Inc.
<b>Event Date:</b>	4/1861	<b>Copyright Date:</b>	1962
<b>Air/Publish Date:</b>	01/15/1962	<b>Clip Length</b>	00:01:52

### Description

This segment from a 1962 NBC documentary on the Civil War explains Robert E. Lee's devotion to the state of Virginia. He was influenced by his family and his upbringing at Arlington House.

### Keywords

Civil War, General Robert E. Lee, Virginia, Heritage, Harry Lee, Mary Anna Randolph Custis, Arlington House, Children, Abraham Lincoln, Military Strategies

### Transcript

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NARRATOR: Even for the ordinary Virginian of the time, it was a natural thing to pledge first allegiance to his native state, and Lee was no ordinary Virginian. The history of his family was woven into the history of the state and his character had been shaped by that heritage. But his devotion to Virginia was more than an ideal, it also involved his warmest human feelings.

Arlington House was an embodiment of both these loyalties. It was here that Lee, since his young manhood, had made and maintained the family ties that meant so much to him. It was here that he met and married Mary Custis, whose piety quickened his own religious feelings, and whose chronic ill health tested his patience. Since Mary was seldom well enough to travel, it was here too that he had spent his

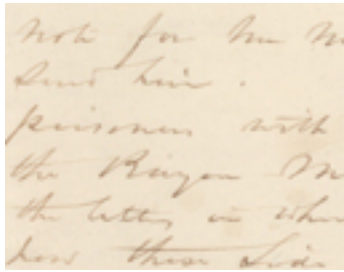
happiest days with her and their seven children.

Arlington House had been built by his wife's father, who was the adopted son of George Washington. Mr. Custis had spent his early years at Mount Vernon, and reminders of Washington were part of the atmosphere at Arlington. They intensified Lee's admiration for a man closely leaned to the life of his own family as well, for Lee's father had performed brilliantly under General Washington in the Revolutionary War and became known as Light Horse Harry Lee. His son Robert would wield a more sober reputation. Even as a young officer, he was described as one with whom nobody ventured to take a liberty, though he was the model of a soldier, and though ideal of a Christian man.

## Related Cue Cards

General William T. Sherman Writes: Southerners Moving to Texas with Slaves  
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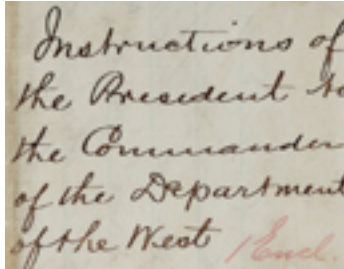
In this letter from the Civil War, General William Tecumseh Sherman mentions that some slave-owners were fleeing with their slaves to Texas to avoid wartime disruptions.



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Letter from Lincoln to His General: "A Few Suggestions"  
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This draft of a letter from Abraham Lincoln to General David Hunter shows the wartime president as an active commander-in-chief.



Instructions of  
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of the West / Encl.

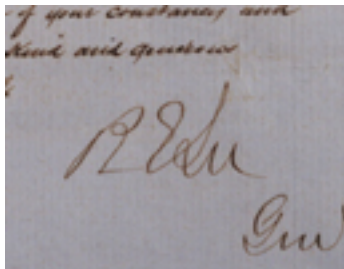
General George B. McClellan  
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General George B. McClellan is considered a hero for whipping the Union Army into shape after the Battle of Bull Run.



Robert E. Lee's Farewell to his Army of Northern Virginia After Surrender  
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In this copy of Lee's farewell address written on the day after his surrender to General Grant, Lee sends his troops home "with an unceasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your Country."



If your constancy and  
kind and generous  
R. E. Lee  
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